

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number: 14001147**

**Date Listed: 1/14/2015**

Government Hill Federal Housing  
Historic District  
Property Name

Anchorage  
County

AK  
State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

1/14/2015  
Date of Action

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**Amended Items in Nomination:**

Resource Count

The Resource Count is revised to read: *19 contributing buildings*. [The two previously listed contributing resources were incorrectly included in the count, which should reflect only new additions to the Register.]

Significance

The Period of Significance is revised to read: *1915-1950*. [The period reflects the entire evolution of the neighborhood from its initial, early twentieth century development by the AEC to its final build-out as a cohesive residential community by 1950. Each era is reflected in the differing forms, patterns, and changes to the included residential buildings, which form the cohesive neighborhood.]

Geographical Data

The district sketch map should be annotated with specific building numbers or addresses that correspond to the narrative. (Please see attached revised map) [Each district sketch map should include the names of places, such as street addresses or parcel numbers that correspond to the description of resources in section 7.]

These clarifications were confirmed with the AK SHPO office.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

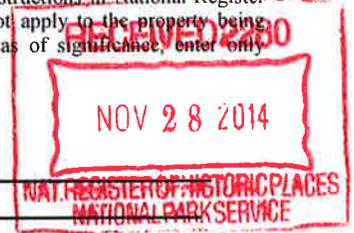
- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

1147

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District

Other names/site number: AHRS Site No. ANC-02108

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: West Harvard, Delaney, and Brown Streets

City or town: Anchorage State: Alaska County: Anchorage

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide   X   local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

  X   A     B     C     D

<u>Joan M. Anderson, Deputy SHPO</u>	<u>20 November 2014</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Alaska</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

  
Signature of the Keeper

1/14/2015  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

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**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>21</u>	<u>6</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>23</u>	<u>6</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Domestic- single dwelling
- Domestic- multiple dwelling
- Landscape- park
- \_\_\_\_\_

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### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic - single dwelling

Domestic - multiple dwelling

Landscape - park

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No style

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: N/A

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District is at the west end of the neighborhood located about a half mile north of downtown Anchorage, Alaska. Government Hill is the name for a bluff that overlooks the railroad and port facilities at the mouth of Ship Creek. West of Brown Street is a distinct and cohesive area characterized by narrow streets, alleys and parks. The houses are unevenly spaced. The two parks are historically designated open spaces. The neighborhood has magnificent views of Knik Arm, the mouth of Ship Creek, and downtown Anchorage. Within the historic district boundaries are twenty-one contributing buildings, two contributing sites, and six non-contributing buildings. These contributing buildings include single family homes and duplexes principally from two periods of construction--the late 1910s and the late 1940s to early 1950s-- both in response to the need for housing by several federal agencies in a city with limited housing options. More than fifty years later, the Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District retains historic integrity and conveys the sense of a cohesive neighborhood. The houses and duplexes convey the sense and appearance of government housing projects.

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## Narrative Description

Executive Order 2242 issued in 1915 designated the bluff, where the neighborhood is, as part of the federal government's Railroad Reserve. In 1915, 1944, and 1948, the federal Alaska Railroad built housing on the site for its employees. In 1941, the railroad allowed the military to build two houses in the neighborhood (listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004 as the Civil Works Residential Dwellings). In 1949, the railroad allowed the federal Alaska Road Commission to build two duplexes in the area. The neighborhood had its own power, telephone, sewer, and fire services, separate from the City of Anchorage. An aerial photograph taken in 1950 shows the area nominated. The photograph clearly shows the land to the east largely undeveloped.

The Alaska Engineering Commission built the first houses on the bluff for railroad employees in 1915. Called cottages, the thirteen houses were similar in layout and design. Each was one and a half stories, wood frame on wood foundations, and asymmetrical. Each had horizontal clapboard siding and a steep gable roof with exposed rafters. Most had 4/4 sash windows evenly spaced on each side of the first floor, one square four-pane window in each gable, and a half-width open gable porch with an off-center 4-panel door. Each house measured 23 by 34 feet. In the back, each cottage had an enclosed gabled extension with a door. Behind each cottage was a wood coal shed, one of which remains. The cottages were placed without lot or street platting facing Knik Arm or the railroad yard. The alignment formed an "L" along the bluff. Cottages 2-6 (number 1 was never built) faced west overlooking Knik Arm. Cottages 7-14 faced south overlooking Ship Creek and the railroad yards. There were alleys behind the cottages and a dirt path in front of all the cottages.

By the 1940s most of the cottages had been modified. Changes included enclosing front porches, building additions on the sides and backs of the houses, and adding garages and sheds on the lots. The owners of Cottage 11 built a garage in the early 1930s that was used as a grocery store in the 1940s and 1950s. Four cottages retain their physical integrity from the 1940s and are contributing properties in the district. Three cottages in the district no longer have physical integrity. The cottages that stood on the west side of Delaney Street have been replaced by houses of a different size, scale and massing and are not included in the district.

The second government housing program was in 1941 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built two houses (Civil Works Residential Dwellings, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004). Located at 786 and 800 Delaney Street, the two identical houses were built for the district engineer and his assistant. The Alaska Railroad leased the land to the Army. The front elevations of the houses overlook Knik Arm. Each is a one-story wood frame building with a gabled roof, wide wooden clapboard siding, a concrete foundation and basement, an interior chimney, and vertical scalloped edging on the gable walls. Each measures 25' x 45' and has an attached garage on the rear elevation that faces the A.E.C. cottages.

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Ten duplexes comprise the third government housing program in the district. The Federal Public Housing Authority built them in 1944 to house wartime railroad employees. Nine of the duplexes face each other along Manor Street, and the tenth, on Delaney Street, faces west. Each duplex is a two-story, symmetrical, rectangular wood frame building with a gable roof and full basement. Each had horizontal clapboard siding on the second story and vertical shiplap siding on the first story. Large wood trim boards visually separated the stories, and the second story had corner trim. Each had an enclosed one-story gable entrance center in the front façade, and a shed-roofed entry centered on each side. Concrete steps led down from the front entry, and wooden steps from the side entries.

These duplexes have central chimneys and shingled roofs. They originally had six wood-frame double-hung 6/6 windows on the front façade, with two paired windows flanking the central entry. The side elevations originally had five double hung 6/6 windows, two flanking the side entrance doors. On each side was a dirt driveway. Along the street and up to each front entrance were concrete walks.

Although they all have been modified, eight of the duplexes retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling and association. Modifications include replaced windows, enclosed side porches, and the addition of shutters. Several are now single family dwellings. The driveways are paved and the walks no longer exist. The two non-contributing duplexes have lost their symmetry due to recent additions, but retain their original size and scale.

In 1948, the Alaska Railroad placed four pre-fabricated Harmon Corporation houses manufactured in Philadelphia in a row along the northwest corner of the bluff. Each was a one story, gable roof building with aluminum siding. They had steel wall studs and roof trusses. The windows had two horizontal glass panes in metal frames. The exteriors were finished with a stucco-like paint. One of these houses remains and is a contributing building in the historic district.

In 1949, the Alaska Railroad leased land to the Alaska Road Commission to build two duplexes on Brown Street. Each is a two-story, symmetrical, wood frame building with a gable roof and full basement. Each originally had wood shiplap siding. They had central enclosed gable entrances on the front and rear elevations with wood steps leading to the front doors. Each has exterior chimneys near the rear of each unit. The first story of each building originally had four side-by-side 1/1 shuttered windows in metal frames on the front façade, the same on the rear elevation, and one window each on the north and south elevations. The second story had four side-by-side 1/1 shuttered windows on the front façade, the same on the rear elevation, and one larger and one smaller of the same on the north and south elevations.

These duplexes retain their integrity of location, design, setting, feeling and association. In the 1950s, driveways were built directly in front of each building, separated by a walk leading to the front entry and strips

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of grass. Modifications to the buildings include rear additions, single-light windows, and the replacement of the shiplap siding with plywood. A ramp has been added to the north building.

Four other contributing buildings in the district were built by federal railroad employees on land leased from the Alaska Railroad by 1950. They are wood frame, one or one-and-a-half story single family homes.

In addition to the houses and duplexes, two parks are historically associated with the area. Al Miller Memorial Park is behind the duplexes between Manor Avenue and Delaney Street. In the late 1930s Alaska Labrador Furs leased the land where the park and the duplexes at 319-322 West Manor are today. In the 1950s several families had small gardens there. In 1975, the city formally designated the area a park and named it for Al Miller, a Government Hill resident who advocated for parks in the neighborhood.

Brown's Point Park, next to the Civil Works Cottages on the bluff at the end of West Harvard Avenue, never had a building on it although the Alaska Railroad had planned to put one there. Residents used the open area. It has spectacular views of Anchorage and Cook Inlet. The city formally designated the area a park in 1960 and named it for Jack and Nellie Brown who lived in Cottage 7 from 1927 to 1979.

There are six non-contributing buildings in the district. Three, on Harvard Avenue, are remodeled 1915 cottages. The roofs of two of these, notably, have their original pitch. Two of the 1944 duplexes have additions that changed their original symmetry. The other non-contributing building is a ranch-style house, built in 1944, that has been remodeled. The non-contributing buildings do not overwhelm the historic character of the neighborhood.

The Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District is a cohesive residential area, now formally part of the Municipality of Anchorage. The houses and duplexes provided necessary housing for government employees. The spacing of the houses, the narrow streets and alleyways, and the designated open spaces characterize the neighborhood and government housing projects in Anchorage before the urban renewal government housing projects of the 1960s.

## CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

### **1915 cottages**

335 West Harvard Avenue, Cottage 8 (AHR Site No. ANC-01801). Built in 1915. The roof has its original pitch. The porch on the front façade has its original pitch and door. A small covered entryway has been added to the rear of the building. There is a two car, flat-roof attached garage on the west elevation, built in 1938. A basement has been added. The windows are replacements but are 4/4 windows similar to the originals. There is a dormer with a door to the roof of the garage on the west side.

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255 West Harvard Avenue, Cottage 11 (AHR Site No. ANC-00725). Built in 1915. This is the least modified cottage. Several of the windows have single fixed glass panes. The porch is enclosed by a three-foot high lattice. The roof is metal-clad. It is the only cottage with its original coal shed. The shed has a small wooden addition.

239 West Harvard Avenue, Cottage 12 (AHR Site No. ANC-01804). Built in 1915. The cottage retains its original roof pitch. The front porch is now enclosed and there is an arctic entryway added to it. A shed-roofed addition on the east elevation was built in 1948. The windows have been replaced with 1/1 sash windows. There is one Chicago-type window on the front façade. The roof of the porch has been extended to the west forming a main entry. There are french doors on the west elevation that lead to a deck. There are two additions on the back of the house. The first addition mimics the original roof, and holds a staircase. The second addition adds a gable-ended entryway. A single dormer is on the west side of the roof. The cottage now has asphalt siding.

223 West Harvard Avenue, Cottage 13 (AHR Site No. ANC-01805). Built in 1915. The front porch is enclosed and has 4/4 sash windows and the original 4-cross pane door. There is a transom window above the entry. Three small, shed dormer windows are on the east and a single shed dormer window on the west of the roof. One square, four-pane casement window and one 4/4 sash window is on the west wall. A storage building was moved to the site in 1946. It has clapboard siding and small casement windows. A one-car, flat-roofed detached garage is on the east side of the lot.

### **Civil Works residential dwellings (Brown's Point cottages)**

786 Delaney Street, 800 Delaney Street (AHR Site No. ANC-00048 and ANC-01205). Built in 1941. Each house is a one-story wood frame building with a metal-covered gabled roof, wide wooden clapboard siding and a concrete foundation and basement. Each has an interior chimney and vertical scalloped edging on the gable walls. Each house measures 25' x 45', and has an attached garage. There are gabled arctic entryways on the west facades, which are flanked by roof-to-floor single pane windows. There are additional double-hung sash windows on each facade. The attached garages have tri-fold doors that open horizontally. There is an interior door leading from each house to the garage with a small interior window next to it. The houses have decorative shutters and straight driveways east from the garage to Delaney Street. The houses were listed on the National Register in 2004 and were restored in 2005.

### **1944 duplexes**

320-322 West Manor Avenue (AHR Site No. ANC-01809). This duplex is largely unchanged from its original appearance. The duplex is a two-story, symmetrical, rectangular wood frame building with a gable roof and full basement. The original siding has been replaced with horizontal clapboard siding. Original double hung 6 over 6 wood windows and 6 lite partially glazed doorways remain intact.

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220-222 West Manor Avenue (AHRS Site No. ANC-01815). This is the least modified of the duplexes. It is a two-story, symmetrical, rectangular wood frame building with a gable roof and full basement. 220-222 West Manor retains its original horizontal clapboard siding on the second story and vertical shiplap siding on the first story as well as the original double hung 6 over 6 wood windows and 6 lite partially glazed doorways remain intact. Wood shutters have been added.

901-903 Delaney Street (AHRS Site No. ANC-01808). This duplex is a two-story, symmetrical, rectangular wood frame building with a gable roof and full basement. It now has horizontal aluminum siding. The paired double hung windows on the front façade have been replaced by a single pane fixed window in the south unit, and a corner casement window in the north unit. There are now shutters on the second story. A small gable roof addition has been added to the north elevation as an entryway.

319-321 West Manor Avenue (AHRS Site No. ANC-01810). This duplex is a two-story, symmetrical, rectangular wood frame building with a gable roof and full basement. It now has horizontal aluminum siding. The porch on the west elevation is an enclosed screen porch. The wooden steps on the east elevation have been replaced by concrete steps.

307-309 West Manor Avenue (AHRS Site No. ANC-01811). This duplex is a two-story, symmetrical, rectangular wood frame building with a gable roof and full basement. It now has horizontal aluminum siding. The porch on the west elevation has been enlarged and has wooden steps. The porch on the east elevation has been enclosed creating a small entryway.

245-247 West Manor Avenue (AHRS Site No. ANC-01812). This duplex is a two-story, symmetrical, rectangular wood frame building with a gable roof and full basement. It has its original siding and windows. It is now a single family home. The paired window opening on the west of the front façade is now a bay window.

233 West Manor Avenue (AHRS Site No. ANC-01814). This duplex is a two-story, symmetrical, rectangular wood frame building with a gable roof and full basement. It now has horizontal aluminum siding. A two story garage with living space was added to the east elevation in 1995. The addition is set back from the original house and is easy to differentiate from the original building. The original windows have been replaced by one, two and three light metal frame casement windows. It is now a single family home.

221-223 West Manor Avenue (AHRS Site No. ANC-01816). This duplex is a two-story, symmetrical, rectangular wood frame building with a gable roof and full basement. It now has horizontal vinyl siding. The windows have thin shutters. The west elevation has an enclosed screen porch with a small wooden deck. The porch on the east elevation has been extended.

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## 1949 duplexes

924-926 Brown Street (AHRS Site No. ANC-01387). The shiplap siding was removed and replaced with plywood. The original double hung 1/1 windows are now single pane awning and casement windows. The small window on the south side of the second story was removed. There is an addition on the rear. The original shutters have been removed. The exterior chimneys have been covered with plywood.

944-946 Brown Street (AHRS Site No. ANC-01386). The shiplap siding was removed and replaced with plywood. The original double hung 1/1 windows are now single pane awning and casement windows. The small window on the south side of the second story was removed. There is an addition on the rear. The original shutters have been removed. The exterior chimneys have been covered with plywood. A ramp has been added to the south elevation.

## Other contributing buildings

330 West Manor Avenue (AHRS Site No. ANC-01818). Built in 1944. This is a one-and-a-half story wood frame house with clapboard siding and a high peaked gable roof. It was originally a garage. A gabled, enclosed arctic entryway faces Manor Street. A single awning window is in the gable above the entry. Two casement windows are on the façade, and the east and west elevations have one. A 1/1 sash window is on the front of the entry and the door on the side. A shed-roofed addition has been added to the rear.

819 Delaney Street (AHRS Site no. ANC-01819). Built in 1944. This is a one-and-a-half story wood frame house with a high peaked wood-shingle roof. There is a cross-gable roof at the rear of the building. The building has horizontal clapboard siding. There is a gabled, enclosed entryway facing south. A shed-roofed, enclosed entry faces Delaney Street. There are wood-frame six-light and one-light windows.

818 Brown Street (AHRS Site No. ANC-01837). Built in 1941. This a one story, rectangular wood frame house, about 12' x 30' with a low hip roof. It has a chimney on the east end. Windows are 2/2 double-hung of various sizes on the north and south elevations. Two single pane windows are on the west elevation, and two large 16 light pane windows sit perpendicular on the north east corner of the building. There is an entry on the southwest corner. The two-car garage at the rear of the lot is now a four-car garage.

108 Colwell Street, Thompson's Grocery (AHRS Site No. ANC-01803). A small, one-story, wood frame gable-roofed building that fronts Colwell Street and sits on the lot of Cottage 11. This building has the same metal roofing and clapboard siding as Cottage 11. There are two sets of small, side-by-side four light windows on the side elevations and one pair of the same on the front façade. It was built in the 1930s as a garage, and was Thompson's Grocery in the 1940s and 1950s. Today it is a residential rental unit.

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815 Colwell Street (AHRS Site No. ANC-01836). Built in 1944. This is a one story gable roof house. A gable roof addition perpendicular to the main structure was added in 1966. It has board and batten siding. Windows are nine-light casement or 1/1 sash. There is a detached garage with a shed roof along the south side to create a covered walkway.

928 Delaney Street (AHRS Site No. ANC-01820). Built in 1948. This one story, gable roof building has its original aluminum siding. The roof is shingled and the chimney was restored with large stones. It now has double hung 6/6 vinyl frame windows. The open porch has been enlarged. This is the only Harman house on Delaney Street that has its integrity.

## **Parks**

780 Delaney Street, Brown's Point Park (AHRS Site No. ANC-2109). Approximately one acre of grass and trees. There is a paved area with bollards that is being removed as part of a restoration project. The area is being seeded with grass. There is a totem pole in the park that was erected by school children over forty years ago that is scheduled to be restored.

240 West Cook Avenue, Al Miller Memorial Park (AHRS Site No. ANC-2110). Approximately one acre of grass and trees. There is playground equipment and several picnic tables.

## NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

349 West Harvard Avenue, Cottage 7 (AHRS Site No. ANC-00046). Built in 1915, remodeled in 1976 and again in 2013. The pitch of the original roof is visible on the west elevation. This house is now a gabled roof, two-story building with flat-roof additions on the south and east elevations.

323 West Harvard Avenue, Cottage 9 (AHRS Site No. ANC-01801). Built in 1915, remodeled in 1959. It now is a gable roof, two-story building finished with stucco.

313 West Harvard Avenue, Cottage 10 (AHRS Site No. ANC-01802). Built in 1915, remodeled in 1973. The building is clad in wood shingles. The pitch of the original roof is visible on the east side of this building. There is a two-and-a-half story addition on the west elevation, and the front of the original cottage is enclosed with large, asymmetrical plate glass windows. The rest of the building has single and paired casement windows. There are seven gabled roof lines. Wood decks have been added at the back of the house.

232-234 West Manor Avenue (AHRS Site No. ANC-01813). Built in 1944, remodeled in 1965. This duplex has horizontal wood clapboard siding. There are additions on the north, east and west elevations. A shed-

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roofed entryway replaced the original on the front façade. The west elevation has a two-story addition. On the east elevation, the porch was enclosed and enlarged to form an arctic entryway. The first floor of the addition has windows similar to the original windows in the duplex. The second story of this addition has a three-light window. The first floor windows have shutters. This is now a single family home.

209-211 West Manor Avenue (AHR Site No. ANC-01817). Built in 1944, remodeled in 1985. All additions are to the rear of the building, leaving the front façade at its original size and scale. The original windows have been replaced with one, two and three light metal frame windows. The porch on the west elevation is now raised with a shed roof. The building is a triplex.

310 West Manor Avenue (AHR Site No. ANC-01835). Built in 1944, and remodeled in 1994. This is a two story, gable roof building with horizontal wood clapboard siding. There are both paired and single 1/1 sash windows and four and six-light casement windows. Two dormers were added to the east roof and one to the west roof. A shed-roofed arctic entryway was built at the south entrance. A two story addition was built on the west elevation. A bay window was added to the north elevation.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community planning and development

**Period of Significance**

1950

**Significant Dates**

1950

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Alaska Engineering Commission

Alaska Railroad

Army Corps of Engineers

Alaska Road Commission

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District, north of downtown Anchorage and the Alaska Railroad yard, is a distinct group of houses and duplexes built by the Federal government between 1915 and 1950. The district is eligible under Criterion A at the local level. The district grew as a series of housing projects on federal land to meet the needs for housing employees first in a new city and again when the military established a major base in World War II. The sequence of houses built by the federal government in the area illustrates the federal government's long presence in Anchorage. The neighborhood stood geographically apart from other residential neighborhoods in Anchorage, remaining isolated until the early 1950s. Today the neighborhood continues to have a unique cohesion. The period of significance is the year 1950, when building in the district from the various federal programs stood and before new houses were built in close proximity to the east end of the district.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District is a distinct group of houses and duplexes built between 1915 and 1950. The city of Anchorage started as a construction center for the federal government's railroad project in 1915. The Alaska Engineering Commission, constructing the railroad, selected the bluff above the mouth of Ship Creek to build houses for its employees and quickly erected twelve cottages along the bluff. In 1940, the military's plans for defense of North America included bases in Alaska. The military chose Anchorage for an airfield and army base and as construction headquarters for the territory. The Alaska Railroad experienced a huge increase in passengers and freight. Housing in Anchorage was scarce. The railroad allowed the Army to build two houses at the western end of the bluff for Army Corps of Engineer senior personnel. The railroad built ten duplexes, followed by four pre-fabricated houses and several one-story buildings in 1944 for its increased number of employees. In 1949 the railroad leased land on Government Hill to another federal agency, the Alaska Road Commission for several duplexes. In an aerial photograph taken in 1950, the Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District appears as a discrete residential area. The photograph shows open spaces, narrow streets, and alleys that still define the area. The Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District tells of the initial, continuing and ongoing presence of the federal government in the Municipality of Anchorage.

### **Historic background**

In March 1914, Congress passed an act authorizing the president to select a route for a railroad the government would build in the Territory of Alaska. President Woodrow Wilson appointed three men to the Alaska Engineering Commission (A.E.C.) to study and recommend a route. The route chosen was from Seward to Fairbanks. The engineers selected the mouth of Ship Creek,

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near the head of Cook Inlet, for the major southern construction camp because work could be done north and south from the site. Within a few months of the announcement more than two thousand people came to the site in search of work.

At the new site, the A.E.C. built houses to provide housing for its permanent employees. Its first houses were built on the bluff just north of the area selected for the railroad yard. The bluff had been included in the railroad reserve established by Executive Order 2242 in August 1915. Twelve cottages, all from the same architectural plan, were constructed on what became known as Government Hill that year. The A.E.C. initially planned to build its main office building on the point of the bluff and establish a park immediately behind it, but changed its plans. The site for the building and park remained undeveloped, and today is Brown's Point Park. The twelve cottages were the only buildings at the west end of Government Hill until the 1940s.

In 1920 the A.E.C. got the City of Anchorage to incorporate, but did not relinquish ownership of Government Hill. Although the railroad stopped managing the town, it continued to be the town's major employer. In 1927, Noel W. Smith, general manager of the railroad, announced in the *Anchorage Times* the houses on Government Hill would be sold. The land would continue to be owned by the railroad, and could be leased for a maximum of twenty years. By 1931, the cottages had all been sold, most to railroad employees.

The federal government recognized Alaska's strategic military position in the Pacific and during the late 1930s started building defenses in the territory. In 1939, the Army Corp of Engineers established an office in Anchorage to oversee several base construction projects along Alaska's southern coast. In 1940, the War Department decided to build an airfield and army base near Anchorage. Construction started on Elmendorf Field and Fort Richardson, located immediately east of Government Hill. The project employed up to 3,415 civilian and government employees. Housing was scarce. Workers lived in tents and hastily constructed barracks. Some people, including railroad cottage owners on Government Hill, added buildings on their property to rent as housing.

The Army Corps of Engineers assumed control of all military construction in Alaska in 1941. Captain Benjamin B. Talley, in charge of construction at Elmendorf Field and Fort Richardson, started supervising the transportation of military supplies by sea and rail into and out of the port of Anchorage. Housing for military personnel, especially commissioned officers and their families, was unavailable. He leased land from the Alaska Railroad at the west end of Government Hill, for two houses (listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004). Talley requested the houses be similar in design to ones he had seen at Mud Mountain Dam in Washington State. Talley lived in one of these houses with his wife for two years. The other house was occupied by Resident Engineer Colonel Craig Smyser. The houses continued to be occupied by Corps of Engineers employees until 1980. Today, the Municipality of Anchorage owns the houses and the Alaska Railroad the land.

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The Alaska Railroad was heavily used for the military build-up around the territory during World War II and for Cold War military site construction after. Freight and passenger loads increased threefold. With few civilians available for employment during the war, the Alaska Defense Command requested a railroad operating battalion be sent to Alaska after Dutch Harbor was bombed in June 1942. The 714<sup>th</sup> Transportation Corps Railway Operating Battalion arrived in 1943. The battalion performed much of the railroad maintenance and construction, but the railroad continued to seek permanent employees to handle the increased work. The lack of housing discouraged family men from taking jobs in Anchorage. The railroad got the Federal Public Housing Authority to build ten duplexes on Government Hill in 1944. The War Department distributed a pamphlet entitled "What Has Alaska to Offer Postwar Pioneers?" to recruit workers. The pamphlet said Alaska needed "young technicians to develop labor-saving machinery and transportation equipment to solve Alaska's problem of vast distances, few hands, and many tasks." Men could relocate to the area with the promise of a good paying job and housing for their family.

At the same time, some railroad employees built single-family one and one-and-a-half story houses on lots next to the duplexes. One of the houses, at 816 Colwell Street, was the home of Bee and Johnny Thompson. They rented the garage on the Cottage 11 lot and for a few years used it for a grocery. Although most families obtained their bulk food and supplies from the Alaska Railroad commissary, Thompson's Grocery carried perishables and convenience items.

In 1948, the Alaska Railroad built four more houses in the neighborhood. These were prefabricated aluminum houses, popular in the post-war era. The first residents were the general manager, a shop superintendent, a chief engineer, and a general council for the railroad. The houses were at the northwest corner of the bluff. They were large lots and had spectacular views of Cook Inlet and Mt. McKinley.

During the war years, the federal Alaska Road Commission was building, improving, and maintaining roads around Anchorage. In 1943, the ARC reported that "for the first time in 22 years, it was necessary to ship men in from Seattle." In 1945, the ARC said "Due to difficulties of securing competent labor, equipment, repair parts and materials, no new construction is recommended until after the war." The war ended, and in 1947, \$160,000 was appropriated to the ARC from the Department of Transportation for permanent shops and warehouses in Anchorage. Construction began on a road along Turnagain Arm to connect Anchorage and Seward. Permanent ARC employees in Anchorage needed housing.

The Alaska Railroad and the ARC established a partnership in 1948, as the railroad was built on the only practical right of way between Anchorage and Seward. The Secretary of the Interior negotiated and managed special agreements between the ARC, the Bureau of Public Roads, and the Alaska Railroad. Road construction began. John R. Noyes, Commissioner of Roads for Alaska, worried "the entire road building program [would] fail for lack of the necessities of life for essential employees." In 1949, the ARC leased land from the railroad at the west end of Government Hill and contracted with Anchorage Builders and Sullen & Hoss to build two

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duplexes for employees. The ARC 1949 annual report noted the duplexes “became the nucleus of living quarters upon which some of our most important new employees depended.” The duplexes housed ARC employees until 1960, and U.S. Forest Service employees until the 1990s.

The Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District grew as a series of housing projects on federal lands to meet the needs for housing employees. The neighborhood stood apart from other residential neighborhoods in Anchorage. It remained isolated until the early 1950s. Today the neighborhood continues to have a unique cohesion. The sequence of houses built by the federal government in the area illustrates the federal government’s long presence in Anchorage.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

*Alaska Railroad Record*. 1916-1918. Copies on file at the Office of History and Archaeology, Anchorage, Alaska.

*Alaska Road Commission Annual Reports*. 1942-1953. Copies on file at the Office of History and Archaeology, Anchorage, Alaska.

Barry, Mary J. *Jack and Nellie Brown: Pioneer Settlers of Anchorage, Alaska*. Anchorage, Alaska: M J P Barry, 2000.

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U.S. War Department. G.I. Pamphlet Series 1943-1945. Taken from  
[www.historians.org/projects/giroundtable.htm](http://www.historians.org/projects/giroundtable.htm) on June 17, 2006.

Wilson, William H. *Railroad in the Clouds: The Alaska Railroad in the Age of Steam, 1914-1945*. Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing, 1977.

Woodman, Lyman L. *Duty Station Northwest: The U.S. Army in Alaska and Western Canada, 1867-1987*. Anchorage, Alaska: Alaska Historical Society, 1997.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):** N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** AHRS Site No. ANC-02108

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 5.09

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NAD 1983

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 61.22831637 | Longitude: -149.88665213 |
| 2. Latitude:             | Longitude:               |
| 3. Latitude:             | Longitude:               |
| 4. Latitude:             | Longitude:               |

**Or**

#### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                   |                     |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Zone: 06 | Easting: 345128.7 | Northing: 6791526.4 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:          | Northing:           |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:          | Northing:           |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :         | Northing:           |

#### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The district is a neighborhood at the far west end of Government Hill. It is defined by the boundaries of the included properties, built between 1915 and 1950 that have physical integrity. The properties lie between 223 and 349 West Harvard Avenue, 818 and 926 Brown Street, 209 and 330 West Manor, 780 and 800 Delaney, and 928 Delaney and 926 Brown. The boundary is indicated on the map entitled "Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District" included with this nomination. Lots 1-4, Tract C, Anchorage Townsite, North Addition; Lots 1-3 Tract D, Anchorage Townsite, North Addition, Blocks B, E, F, G, H and Y, Anchorage Townsite, North Addition.

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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The north boundary is Cook Avenue. The east boundary is Brown Street. The south boundary is West Harvard Avenue. The west boundary includes the lots of 780 to 800 and 928 Delaney. These boundaries were selected because they represent the discrete residential area developed by multiple federal agencies over a 35 year period. The properties at 812, 824, 836, 900 and 916 of Delaney Street are not included within the boundaries because they are a cohesive row of houses which lack the physical integrity needed to contribute to the district.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Jessica M Benson, Intern; Cody Inman; Summer Rickman, Architectural Historian

organization: Alaska Office of History and Archaeology

street & number: 550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1310

city or town: Anchorage state: Alaska zip code: 99501-3565

e-mail: oha@alaska.net

telephone : 907.269.8721

date: November 6, 2006; reviewed February 28, 2014

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Government Hill Federal Housing Historic  
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Anchorage, Alaska

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**Photo Log (see attached plan with photo points)**

Name of Property: Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Anchorage  
County: Anchorage State: Alaska  
Photographer: Sarah Wilson  
Date Photographed: August 15, 2013

Photo 1 of 8: AK\_Anchorage\_GovtHill\_0001 – Looking southwest at 786 Delaney (left) and 800 Delaney (right)

Photo 2 of 8: AK\_Anchorage\_GovtHill\_0002 – Looking south at 320-322 West Manor

Name of Property: Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Anchorage  
County: Anchorage State: Alaska  
Photographer: Summer Rickman  
Date Photographed: January 24, 2014

Photo 3 of 8: AK\_Anchorage\_GovtHill\_0003 – Looking north

Photo 4 of 8: AK\_Anchorage\_GovtHill\_0004 – Looking northeast

Photo 5 of 8: AK\_Anchorage\_GovtHill\_0005 – Looking northeast

Photo 6 of 8: AK\_Anchorage\_GovtHill\_0006 – Looking northeast

Photo 7 of 8: AK\_Anchorage\_GovtHill\_0007 – Looking west down W. Manor Avenue towards Delaney Street

Photo 8 of 8: AK\_Anchorage\_GovtHill\_0008 – Looking north

**Historic Photo Log**

Name of Property: Government Hill Federal Housing Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Anchorage  
County: Anchorage State: Alaska

Alaska Railroad Collection; Anchorage Museum, B1979.002.1082  
July 1950 aerial. Close-up of west end of Government Hill showing excellent detail, view southeast.

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



**Government Hill  
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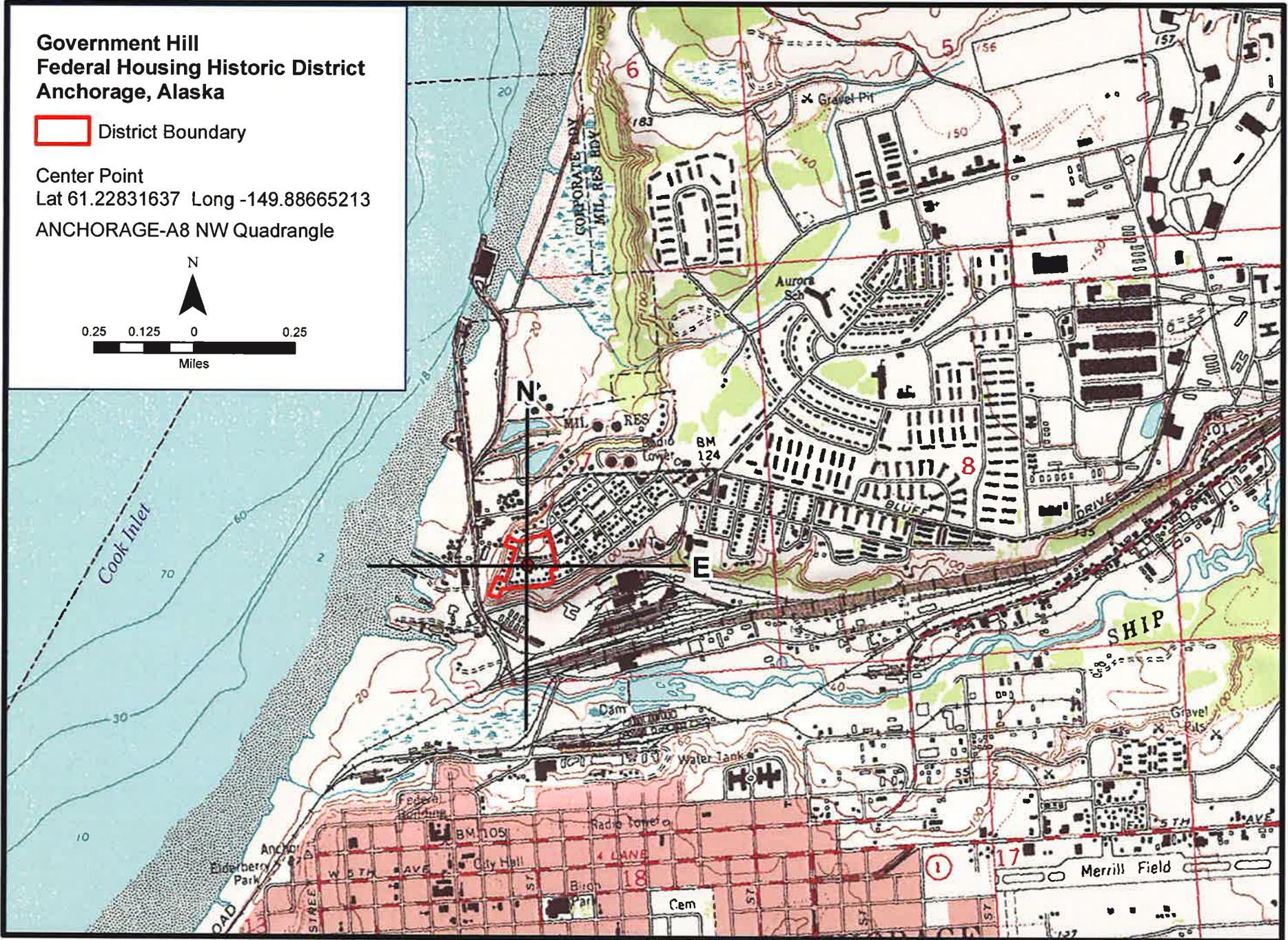
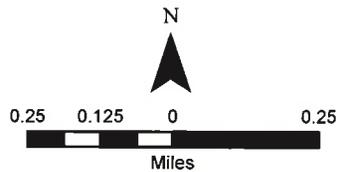
-  District Boundary
-  Contributing Property
-  Non Contributing Property
-  Parks (Contributing)
-  Wooded Area
-  Photo Points (see photo key)

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

**Government Hill  
Federal Housing Historic District  
Anchorage, Alaska**

 District Boundary

Center Point  
Lat 61.22831637 Long -149.88665213  
ANCHORAGE-A8 NW Quadrangle







ELLIS  
ALASKA SENATE



NO PARKING  
ANY TIME  
↔

253



NO PARKING  
ANY TIME  
→





MANOR AV 300  
DELANEY ST 400



NO PARKING ANY

PROUDLY SUPPORT  
ANCHORAGE'S  
CITY  
WORKERS!





4. July 1950 aerial. Close-up of west end of Government Hill showing excellent detail.